

**GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2022**

Course Number: SOCI4301 (15670)

Time: T/Th 3:00-4:20

Location: Old Main 205

Instructor: Dr. Angela Frederick

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Office Hours: T/Th 1:30 – 2:30, F 10:00 – 11:00

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Office Hours: M/F 9:00 – 10:00, T 10:30 – 11:30

COURSE OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

Course Overview. This is a survey course in social theory, covering important thinkers from the classical and contemporary eras. The bulk of the classical approaches we will discuss concern efforts to come to grips with rapid social change in Western Europe and North America. Many of the theories, particularly from European thinkers, have been variously critical of the forms and paths of capitalist modernity as it transformed social practices and social landscapes across the 'West.' In the portion of the course devoted to contemporary theory, we will take up questions of power, inequality, and identity. In addition to engaging directly with theory, a central component of this course will be to explore how sociologists apply and challenge theory as they analyze empirical evidence.

Learning Objectives. Students who complete this course should achieve the following objectives:

- Understand and be able to describe major theoretical perspectives in sociology.
- Know about the social and political contexts in which sociological theories were developed.
- Be able to apply sociological theories to your life, current events, and sociological topics.

Required Readings. The following book is required for the course. All additional assigned readings will be available on the course Blackboard page. Please note: you should always refer to your syllabus to confirm the reading assignment for each week.

- Ritzer, George, and Jeffrey Stepnisky. 2017. *Sociological Theory*, 10th ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publishers.

Course Requirements. Course grades are calculated using a point system. A total of 1,000 points are possible in the course. Points for assignments are distributed as follows:

- **Quizzes (100 Points Total).** Quizzes will be given each Tuesday, testing you on the previous week's material. In addition, quizzes will be given on the days you are assigned original texts outside of your textbook. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped. Some quiz questions will have multiple-choice answers; others will require you to write short answers. If you miss a quiz with an excused absence, you will be required to complete an alternative assignment to make up the quiz. If you miss a quiz with an unexcused absence, you will not be allowed to make up the missed quiz.
- **3 Exams (200 points each).**
- **2 Film Reflections (100 points each).** Students will submit two reflections on documentaries we will watch together in class. See assignment description for more details.
- **Class Participation (100 points).** Students will participate in class activities for points. Regular and thoughtful participation in class discussions is also expected and will be factored into students' total participation grade.
- **Ongoing Extra Credit (1 point per class).** During most class periods, you will be given the opportunity to put your cell phone at the front of the room for one extra credit point per class. Exceptions will be made for atypical class periods. Please note that respectful cell phone etiquette is still expected of students who elect to keep their phones with them during class. Please also note that students who are caught violating the honor code of honesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Grading Scale. The grading scale in this course is as follows:

- A = 900–1000 points
- B = 800-899 points
- C = 700-799 points
- D = 600-699 points
- F = 0-599 points

Course Structure. The course structure will be as follows:

- This is a face to face course. PowerPoints will not be provided. Please make sure you connect with several peers in class so you can help each other out when you need to miss a class.
- You are responsible for studying the material from our lectures and keeping up with your readings. Theory can be quite difficult, so manage your time accordingly.
- It is your responsibility to follow your syllabus closely. Extensions on assignments will not be granted simply because you were not keeping up in class and did not know about an assignment.
- While your TA and I are happy to assist with questions, you should first review your course materials to make sure your question is not already answered.

Attendance Policy. Attendance will be taken during every class session. You are granted three unexcused absences during the semester with no penalty. I do not need to know the reason for these absences, unless an extreme emergency has occurred. Car trouble does not constitute an extreme emergency or an excused absence. Your unexcused absences are intended to cover these circumstances. Your final grade will be deducted by 25 points for each additional unexcused absence incurred. Excused absences require documentation of medical/family emergencies or religious holidays.

Professional Communication. Emails should be constructed in a professional manner with appropriate salutation, sentence structure, and closing. “Hey” is not a professional salutation, and my title is “Professor” or “Dr.,” not “Mrs.” Please be advised that I will ask students to revise and resend emails that do not meet professional standards.

Grading Policy. All assignments should be submitted before their deadlines. I do not grant extensions on papers or exams, except in the case of excused absences for which official documentation is required. Five points will be deducted from your paper grade if you submit the paper later than the deadline on the day the assignment is due, and ten points will be deducted from your paper grade for each additional day your assignment is late. Excused students are those with legitimate crises who notify me in a timely manner.

Honor Code. As in all courses at UTEP, students are expected to act honorably in accordance with our mutual educational objectives. If you use someone else’s idea, opinion, concept, or fact, you must cite your source. If you use more than three consecutive words from someone else, you must put the phrase in quotation marks and cite your source. This includes notes from class. Failure to do so is plagiarism, and all such cases will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Disability & Universal Design. We will make it our top priority to build a community that is fully inclusive of all body types, identities, and ways of learning. This will require each of us to be attentive, flexible, and vigilant. If we are engaging in any practices throughout the semester that lead you to feel overlooked, unwelcome, or alienated, I welcome you to come talk with me or to bring it to the entire community. You will be heard. If you have a documented disability

and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Notes:

- Your textbook chapters contain an enormous amount of information about many theorists. In the course schedule below, I identify the scholars with whom you are responsible for engaging. For each assigned chapter, read the broader information the authors provide about the particular school of thought. Then focus your attention on the theorists I identify for each week.
- You do not need to try to memorize the material in each chapter. It is better to turn to the course lectures to focus on particular aspects of the theories.
- This is a tentative schedule. Our schedule might change as the semester progresses.

PART I

Week 1 (8/22-8/26): Introductions

- Chap 1.

Week 2 (8/29-9/2): Karl Marx & Daniel Bell

- Chap 2.

Week 3 (9/5-9/9): Max Weber & George Ritzer

- Chap 4.

Week 4 (9/12-9/16): Emile Durkheim

- Chap 3.

Week 5 (9/19-9/23): Antonio Gramsci

- *Reading uploaded to Blackboard.*
- *Thursday (9/22): EXAM 1 REVIEW.*

Week 6 (9/26-9/30): **EXAM 1**

- Tuesday (9/27): **EXAM 1.**
- Thursday (9/29): **Film Day.**

PART II

Week 7 (10/02-10/06): Modern Sociology in the U.S.

- Chap 6 (du Bois).
- Tuesday (10/03): **FILM REFLECTION 1 DUE.**

Week 8 (10/10-10/14): Postmodern Theory

- Chap 17, section on postmodern social theory (Michele Foucault).

Week 9 (10/17-10/21): Symbolic Interactionism, Part 1

- Chap 9 (Mead & Goffman).

Week 10 (10/23-10/27): Symbolic Interactionism, Part 2

- Chap 9 (Scheff & Hochschild).
- Thursday (10/26): Exam 2 review.

Week 11 (10/31-11/04): EXAM 2

- Tuesday (11/01): **EXAM 2.**
- Thursday (11/03): **Film Day.**

PART III

Week 12 (11/07-11/11): Theorizing Social Class

- Tuesday (11/08): Read Chap 13, section “Agency-Structure Integration” (Bourdieu). **FILM REFLECTION 2 DUE.**
- Thursday (11/10): Read “Invisible Inequality” which can be found on Blackboard.

Week 13 (11/14-11/18): Theorizing Gender & Intersectionality

- Chap 12 (West & Zimmerman, Acker).

Week 14 (11/21-11/25): Theorizing Race and Racism

- Chap 15 (Omi & Winant, Bonilla Silva)
- No class on Thursday. Happy Thanksgiving.

Week 15 (11/28-12/02): **EXAM 3**

- Tuesday (11/29): Catch Up Day and Exam Review
- Thursday (12/01): **EXAM 3**